



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and ninety-third session

193 EX/DR.7.4
PARIS, 20 November 2013
Original: English

Item 7.4 Mandate of the Preparatory Group of the Executive Board

The Executive Board,

1. Bearing in mind its 186 EX/Decision 17 (I), section IV, paragraph 52 by which it decided to establish at its 188th session, on an experimental basis, an Ad Hoc Group with enhanced participation by all UNESCO Member States, to support the preparation of the two plenary commissions of the Executive Board,
2. Referring to the Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group to the Board at its 192nd session on the evaluation of the Group contained in document 192 EX/AHPG.INF (annexed hereto) as well as to the oral report of its Chairperson,
3. Decides to set up the above-mentioned Preparatory Group, composed of the following 18 Members of the Executive Board for the 2014-2015 biennium, three from each group:

Group I	.....	and	.....
Group II	.....	and	.....
Group III	.....	and	.....
Group IV	.....	and	.....
Group V(a)	.....	and	.....
Group V(b)	.....	and	.....

4. Decides further that the terms of reference and the methods of work of the Group are as set out below, in accordance with the annex to its 186 EX/Decision 17 (I):

I. Terms of reference of the Preparatory Group

1. The purpose of the Group is to support the preparation of the work of the two plenary Commissions of the Executive Board in their consideration of agenda items attributed to them for examination. To that end, it shall examine a limited number of items determined in advance through consultations between the Chairpersons of the Executive Board, the Programme and External Relations (PX) and Finance and Administrative (FA) Commissions and the Preparatory Group so as to assist in the preparation of Executive Board discussions.
2. The items to be considered could include, *inter alia*, following examination, where appropriate, of information and documentation supplied by the Secretariat, the following:
 - (a) examination of information provided by the Director-General on the execution of the programme and related budget issues (contained in the EX/4 document),

including intersectoral and extrabudgetary activities, as well as evaluations and their policy recommendations;

- (b) preparations for and follow-up to major conferences and world reports, as required;
- (c) analysis of challenges and recommendations, as required, and how to address them through the ongoing programme implementation and in the planning of the future programme cycle;
- (d) preparation of substantive input to the draft Executive Board report to the General Conference on the implementation of the C/5 document (document C/9).

II. Composition

- 3. The group shall comprise 18 Board Members (3 from each electoral group) with enhanced participation by all UNESCO Member States.

III. Chairpersonship

- 4. The Group shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from amongst its members at its first meeting, for the biennium.

IV. Working methods

- 5. The dates of the meetings of the Group shall be determined so as to ensure that the results of its work are transmitted to Members of the Executive Board 10 working days before the opening of the session.
- 6. The duration of the Group's meetings shall be determined by the Board, taking into account the general organization of its work and the related budgetary allocations but shall not normally exceed three days for each session.
- 7. The group shall work in English and French.
- 8. The States Members of the Executive Board designated as members of the Group which do not have a permanent delegation in France may request financial assistance to facilitate their participation in the work of the Group.
- 9. Concerning questions falling within its competence, the Group may invite representatives of international organizations and relevant official partners, as well as qualified persons.
- 10. Observers shall be accorded full and equal participation rights, except in the case of the adoption of the recommendations.
- 11. The Chairperson of the Group may be asked to report to the Executive Board Bureau, should the Bureau see fit, in order to assist it in carrying out its duties to prepare the Executive Board session. The Chairperson shall not be a member of the Bureau of the Executive Board.

ANNEX

RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS OF THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC PREPARATORY GROUP AT THE 192nd SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

“Evaluation of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group

166. As had been wished by the Chair Ad Hoc Preparatory Group and planned in the agenda, the delegates had the opportunity to review the functioning of Ad Hoc Preparatory Group over the last three meetings and also discuss the results of questionnaires that had been distributed to Member States for completion previously (Refer Annex III on Results).

167. Forty-five questionnaires had been completed and received at the time of compilation and the results unequivocally converged on the usefulness of the group. During the discussions many of the positive aspects of the Group meetings were underlined and suggestions were put forward with the view of further improving upon them.

168. Delegates unanimously concurred that one of the main success factors has been the open-ended character of the group where all delegates, members of the group and observers, could participate as equals contributing to the discussions and debates. They agreed that the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group provided a platform where frank, honest, substantive and strategic debates could be conducted away from the political character of the Executive Board and the General Conference. Delegates also underlined the capital importance of having all documents under review available in a timely manner.

169. It was suggested to increase the number of sessions of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group (to four sessions per year instead of two) to allow for a forum in between the Executive Board meetings where delegates could discuss specific thematic items and keep the momentum for reform and also make proposals to the Director-General or the Executive Board. Delegates felt that increasing the number of the meetings may not be a viable solution under the current financial circumstances.

170. Delegates felt that the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group allowed for more strategic discussions where success and failure stories could also be shared by the Secretariat especially with regard to programme execution through the EX/4 document. In this regard it was strongly suggested that sufficient time is allowed for such strategic discussions where Member States and Delegates could discuss and deliberate thus requiring the agenda to remain focused. With the view of reducing the drafting time spend by the Executive Board and allowing for more strategic debates, it was also suggested that the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group proposes drafts amendments to the Executive Board. However, several Delegates stated that draft decisions should continue to remain within the exclusive purview of the Executive Board and argued that the Flags in the report are now, in fact, directly influencing the decisions of the Executive Board.

171. It was underlined that a greater linkage between the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group and the Executive Board should be achieved but it was also admitted that this could only be possible if Member States duly engaged and read the documents prepared by the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group and made use of their content.

172. Delegates unanimously concurred that the group should be hitherto more institutionalized and as such be renamed simply the “Preparatory Group” doing away in the future with its Ad Hoc character.

173. The suggestion made by some Member States that the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group should be a member of the Bureau given the importance of the group in preparing the debates of the Executive Board was generally well received.

174. The Chairs of the Programme and External Relations and Finance and Administrative Commissions respectively also agreed on the usefulness of the Group and stressed the need for the Chairs to explore further ways in making better use of its findings in the future.

175. The Secretariat equally confirmed the utility of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group noting that the quality of dialogue and exchanges had greatly helped in improving reporting to the governing bodies. Herein it was explained that the EX/4 is not only a reporting exercise but a process and that the Group's deliberations have enabled sectors to take ownership of their reports and continuously improve upon them.

176. The Group commended the Chairperson for her leadership and effectiveness in the conduct of the meetings.

177. Recommendations regarding the evaluation of the work of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group:

- To keep the agenda focused on a limited number of items
- To pursue with the format of an enhanced participation of Member States as observers
- To continue with strategic-oriented discussions
- To refine the links between the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group and the Executive Board
- To support a more institutional group to be renamed "Preparatory Group"
- To recommend to the Chairs of the PX and FA Commissions to make the best use of the Flags and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group prior and during the sessions of the Commissions
- To request that the documents be available on time in order to allow for an in-depth discussion during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group
- To continue with the format of Flags and Recommendations to report to the Executive Board about the findings of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group."

APPENDIX

EVALUATION OF THE AD HOC PREPARATORY GROUP: RESULTS

192nd Session EXB - Evaluation of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group : Results of the Survey		
Total responses received : 45		
Questions	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE %
MANAGEMENT		
1 The agenda was appropriate. Topics were relevant to the mandate of the AHPG.		
Strongly Agree	22	48.9%
Agree	23	51.1%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%
2 Time was used effectively. Discussions were focused.		
Strongly Agree	17	37.8%
Agree	26	57.8%
Disagree	2	4.4%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%
3 The meeting structure and leadership encouraged the right amount of participation from board and non-board Member States.		
Strongly Agree	24	53.3%
Agree	21	46.7%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%
UTILITY		
1 The AHPG had the information necessary in order to make good recommendations.		(1)
Strongly Agree	5	11.1%
Agree	30	66.7%
Disagree	7	15.6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	2	4.4%
2 The meeting helped my delegation understand the issues the Executive Board must deal with.		
Strongly Agree	29	64.4%
Agree	15	33.3%
Disagree	1	2.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%
3 The meeting helped my delegation understand the position of other's and enabled us to work together.		
Strongly Agree	22	48.9%
Agree	21	46.7%
Disagree	2	4.4%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Questions		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE %
IMPACT			
1	The meeting helped with the preparation of draft decisions for the Executive Board.		(2)
	Strongly Agree	21	46.7%
	Agree	20	44.4%
	Disagree	1	2.2%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
	Don't know	1	2.2%
2	The meeting helped improve the quality and focus of discussions in the Executive Board.		
	Strongly Agree	14	31.1%
	Agree	30	66.7%
	Disagree	1	2.2%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
	Don't know	0	0.0%
3	The report of the AHPG was useful to inform debates in the Executive Board and for decision making.		
	Strongly Agree	21	46.7%
	Agree	23	51.1%
	Disagree	0	0.0%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
	Don't know	1	2.2%
(1) One (1) questionnaire has no response for this question (representing 2.2% of total responses received)			
(2) Two (2) questionnaires have no response for this question (representing 4.4% of total responses received)			